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Craggs, R and Neate, HL (2019) Post-colonial careering and the discipline of geography: British geographers in Nigeria and the UK, 1945-1990. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 66. pp. 31-42. ISSN 0305-7488

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**Version:** Accepted Version

**Publisher:** Elsevier

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.05.014>

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***Post-colonial careering and the discipline of geography: British geographers in Nigeria and the UK, 1945-1990***

**Abstract:**

Few geographers wrote explicitly about decolonisation. Yet the ends of empires wrought substantial changes to the discipline of geography. It impacted the places studied, the approaches deemed appropriate, the sites of geographical knowledge production, the lecturing jobs available, and the shape and extent of transnational networks. Focusing on the 'post-colonial careering' of British geographers who worked at the university at Ibadan, Nigeria before returning to academic posts in UK geography departments, this paper explores the interconnections between academic careers, geographical knowledge and decolonisation. It argues that that we can understand these connections in three ways. First, geographers' careers were shaped in important ways by decolonisation; second, these experiences in turn shaped the discipline of geography in the (post)colonial world and the UK; and third, geographers' work at colonial universities and in Britain was not only influenced by, but was itself part of the process of decolonisation. The article contributes to understandings of decolonisation as registered, and actively produced, through academic research and careers, institutional development, and transnational networks. Uncovering the (post)colonial connections which shaped British geography in the post-war period broadens understandings of disciplinary history beyond those which focus on Anglo-American networks and offers opportunities to consider the lessons of these past disciplinary patterns and practices for contemporary geography.

**Key words:**

biography; decolonisation; history of geography; transnational networks; post-colonial connections.

***Post-colonial careering and the discipline of geography: British geographers in Nigeria and the UK, 1945-1990***

This article explores the careers of British geographers (geographers born and educated in the UK) who worked in the geography department of the University College Ibadan (UCI), Nigeria, a colonial and post-colonial university, before returning to the UK. It does so in order to explore one important way in which the process of formal decolonisation shaped the discipline of geography. Whilst geography's engagements with the imperial project have been well documented, accounts have tended to end in the early twentieth century rather than continuing to examine the period of formal decolonisation itself.<sup>1</sup> Unlike earlier periods, where geography and geographers were quite central to the colonial endeavour, by the 1940s, geography, at least in the UK, was more peripheral.<sup>2</sup> Most UK geographers barely engaged with the processes of decolonisation in their research at the time.<sup>3</sup> However, geographers, and geography, were entangled with the end of empire in a number of ways, even if, as Marcus Power and James Sidaway argue, 'this connection was not always acknowledged'.<sup>4</sup> They worked for the late colonial state,

surveying, administering forestry and agriculture, overseeing new development projects and censuses, and they worked for new independent governments in similar roles. They worked in the geography departments of colonial university colleges, and in the new universities of recently independent countries. They taught about the (former) colonies in British universities, and worked in new institutes specializing in development and area studies. They travelled through colonial intellectual networks which continued to matter even after constitutional decolonisation.<sup>5</sup>

We focus here on how the professional lives of British academic geographers of this era were shaped by decolonisation and how their work shaped that same process. Doing so sheds light on the influence of late colonial development and decolonisation on the discipline of geography in the UK. Like others in this special issue, we take a biographical approach. Specifically, we explore the 'post-colonial careering' of a cohort of academic geographers whose careers took them to the University College Ibadan (later the University of Ibadan), Nigeria before they returned to take up positions in UK academia.<sup>6</sup> Post-war Africa, and Nigeria in particular, was a key site for late colonial development projects, which included the university itself.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this expansion and investment, many geographers from Britain, as well as the US and other parts of Europe found themselves lecturing, visiting or examining at Ibadan.

Ibadan provides a useful case study to illustrate the impact of this academic mobility on the discipline, because it was an important site for colonial and post-colonial geography, but was by no means unique. Ibadan was one of several colonial universities founded in the late 1940s, alongside the University College of Khartoum, the University College of the Gold Coast, Makerere University College, the University of Malaya and the University College of the West Indies, which joined a set of institutions founded earlier in India and Ceylon.<sup>8</sup> The experience at Ibadan was broadly comparable to many of the other colonial colleges in Africa, and beyond, with similar patterns of appointments, hiring, 'circulatory-migration' and 'indigenisation' after decolonisation in Ghana, Uganda, Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>9</sup> Without the same racial dynamics, there were also parallels with the earlier experiences of the new university colleges in the settler colonies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand which (alongside South Africa) remained intimately tied to the UK university system until the 1950s.<sup>10</sup>

This paper makes two substantive contributions. First, we contribute to understandings of decolonisation as registered, and actively produced, through academic research and careers, institutional development, and transnational networks. The paper says more about how British geographers' lives were shaped by the end of empire than about how this cohort contributed intellectually to the policy of decolonisation or its critique. However, fundamental to our argument is that the everyday practices of academic life we outline were central to both the 'second colonial occupation' of Africa in the post-war years as development became a colonial priority, and to the subsequent decolonisation of the continent.<sup>11</sup> Working as 'crucial gauges, microcosms and agents' in the process of decolonisation, universities and other sorts of cultural institutions provide an important space through which to understand the dynamics of the end of empire, as well as empire's legacies in the more recent past. The mid twentieth century period we focus on in the paper was understood by many at the time as defined by the large-scale transformations of decolonisation.<sup>12</sup> Here we understand the term decolonisation broadly,

as an ongoing, unfinished practice and negotiation, experienced and performed by individuals and groups beyond the realm of high politics.

Second, the paper contributes to specific disciplinary histories. Work has only recently begun to explore geography's mid twentieth-century political entanglements, and decolonisation, arguably one of the most important geopolitical transformations of that century has remained largely absent from disciplinary histories.<sup>13</sup> This lacuna reflects wider historiographical trends which have foregrounded World War II and the Cold War in narratives of this period, whilst leaving decolonisation relatively neglected.<sup>14</sup> This absence has meant the foregrounding of the experiences of Europe and the superpowers – and the geographies and geographers of these areas – over those of the majority world. This paper begins to address that gap.

Focusing on academic careers worked between Britain and Nigeria allows us to explore how experience in the (former) British Empire shaped British geographers' work, for example their academic networks, their research interests and their publication profiles. These experiences continued to matter throughout careers, including when people returned to roles in the UK. Much of the research about academic mobility does not explore this 'return' in any detail, reflecting broader literatures which tend to focus on the outward movement of experts from the global north and their impact in the south rather than in the UK.<sup>15</sup> Discussion of post-war migration to Britain tends to focus on new Commonwealth (non-white) citizens, rather than British returnees, and to examine their personal experiences rather than their professional contributions.<sup>16</sup> Examining the mobility of British geographers provides one way of uncovering these international connections which shaped British geography in the post-war period, broadening our understandings of disciplinary history beyond those which focus on Anglo-American departments and networks. Though we focus primarily on British geographers, we argue that they brought with them new ideas, publications, expertise and connections formed by and in collaboration with Nigeria and Nigerian geographers. However, like other papers in this special issue, the focus remains on the experience and research of British academics. Whilst an important addition, without similar work on the experience and contributions of geographers from the post-colonial world in relation to decolonisation (or without the incorporation of accounts from the post-colonial world into global disciplinary histories), the picture remains partial and problematic.<sup>17</sup>

## GEOGRAPHY, DECOLONISATION AND CAREERING

Geography's links with empire have long been a focus for research, with scholars exploring the ways that geographers, and geographical knowledge, have supported the imperial project.<sup>18</sup> This work has also demonstrated the way that unacknowledged indigenous labour and expertise contributed to the formation of this knowledge, for example through the use of local guides, translators and surveyors.<sup>19</sup> In the period of late colonialism and decolonisation these connections remained, as anthropologists, geographers, scientists and experts in agriculture, housing and education, overwhelmingly from Europe and funded and employed by the colonial state, researched the impact of development and modernization across Africa.<sup>20</sup> There were continuities between geography and other forms of social and scientific knowledge produced in colonialism and that practiced in and after decolonisation. Whilst colonial nationalism

challenged the political power of Europe within the colonies, it often, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, left undisturbed broader visions for development, modernization and the role of science and Western knowledge within this.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, many of these Western knowledges remain central today, despite growing criticisms stemming from post-colonial and decolonial scholarship.<sup>22</sup>

As Joseph Hodge has noted, these continuities were in part reinforced through careers which continued, sometimes relatively uninterrupted, across 'the seemingly fundamental rupture of decolonization and independence'.<sup>23</sup> Following pioneering work in history and geography, we adopt a 'careering' approach to explore the intersections between mobile professional lives and wider processes of imperialism and decolonisation.<sup>24</sup> Tamson Pietsch, in her work on the British academic world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, demonstrates the value of this approach for unsettling nationalist historiographies that often lock 'scholars whose careers spanned continents within national frames of reference'.<sup>25</sup> Professional academic lives in the British empire involved mobility, circulatory migration and fluidity, as individuals moved, physically and metaphorically, between 'British' and 'colonial' positions and identities.<sup>26</sup> However, these imperial networks were also exclusionary; a 'British' identity and its concomitant advantages of opportunity, pay and conditions was unavailable to many non-white colonial citizens.<sup>27</sup> For British and Nigerian geographers of the 1950s and 1960s, nationality was crucial, clearly defined, and central to contemporary debates about what decolonisation meant in practice. Nevertheless, the contacts, experiences and opportunities of mobility continued to shape their careers and identities in important ways.

We use 'careering' here to highlight particular aspects of geographical labour. First, careering broadens the focus from individuals to highlight the social nature of professional lives worked alongside others. Working with a wider set of careers brings to light broader patterns of mobility, the connections and networks through which academic careers were developed, and the institutional structures through which careers were framed and confined.<sup>28</sup> Second, a focus on careering forces us to expand our timelines for decolonisation from the mid twentieth century, drawing attention to legacies of empire and its endings that stretch into the recent past. Those who were young geographers in late colonial contexts often continued working into the 1990s. When they returned to the UK they brought with them ideas, experiences, regional expertise and connections which continued to matter.<sup>29</sup>

Third, careering highlights the often mundane work and motivations of academic geography, and academic labour as everyday practice. A focus on careers brings to the fore a sense of an academic trajectory actively built, as well as buffeted and shaped by broader geopolitical shifts. Thus it is able to demonstrate the often personal and pragmatic nature of academic careers and the knowledge that then results. Pay, conditions, funding and opportunities are placed centre stage in the account that follows, as these, as well as political, regional and ideological passions shaped the careers discussed. Care must be taken to ensure that a focus on academic careers does not occlude the informal (and untenured) labour of women in support of the professional lives of their husbands and brothers. Many of those mentioned here, and others working elsewhere in the former empire, were married to women with Oxbridge geography

degrees, and several went on to publish as husband and wife teams.<sup>30</sup> Though almost invisible in the formal archives of universities for this period, women's contributions can be found in obituaries, autobiographies, footnotes and acknowledgements.<sup>31</sup>

The paper draws on a wide range of evidence about the academic careers of British geographers that intersected at Ibadan from autobiographical accounts and letters to published work and interviews. These materials reveal the academic and personal networks which produced and sustained (as well as frustrated) the department at Ibadan and its academics, and the professional decisions of those working there. As is often the case with the use of biographical writing, 'much of the available material presents a public record of professional lives and is therefore both partial and subjective'.<sup>32</sup> CVs, and even oral histories and institutional history projects, often 'involve seamless post-facto rationalisations in which ambivalence, multiple motivations, dilemmas and failures are concealed'.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, recollections of academic life can help to uncover that which is left out of a record of scholarly achievement: institutional politics, friendship, support. Private records from the period – such as letters between colleagues – help to fill further gaps, mentioning the support of wives for example, or allowing frustrations or concerns which are erased from later accounts to surface. Even here gaps remain and the story below can only be a partial telling of a rich and complex personal and professional academic network. Nevertheless, these insights allow us to meaningfully explore the links between disciplinary history, academic careers, and decolonisation.

## GEOGRAPHY AT IBADAN

### Colonial networks

In 1948, UCI took in its first cohort of students. Amongst them were those studying for a general geography degree. Geography was one of the original subjects offered to UCI students, on the recommendation of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa, which saw the subject as one of a suite of arts disciplines that could be offered 'to provide a training in clear and objective thought'.<sup>34</sup> The university college was the first in Nigeria, and highly prestigious. UCI started out in what was termed a 'special relationship' with the University of London, who awarded the degrees, agreed the curricula (based on those taught in London), appointed faculty and moderated final exams.<sup>35</sup> Ibadan thus began as a colonial institution, although it was perceived 'by the British and colonised peoples alike, as a step towards eventual self-government' that would 'educate new elites that would one day lead' independent Nigeria. The eventual founding of a university in Nigeria was representative of both a shift in UK policy towards greater investment in the colonies after World War II and the fulfillment of decades of agitation for higher education provision from Nigeria's educated elites.<sup>36</sup>

Although the plan for UCI was shaped significantly by Nigerian demands, in the early years 'mechanisms for staff appointments favoured British candidates' who were 'often selected through informal British academic networks that encompassed Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as Britain itself'.<sup>37</sup> The appointment of geographers to the department at Ibadan was reliant on British colonial institutions and the informal networks that underpinned them. As Pietsch has noted for an earlier period, appointments can be seen as 'a power-laden, historically contingent ... world of access and exclusion'.<sup>38</sup> The Inter-University Council (IUC), a body established in 1946 by the UK government to work with British universities 'to assist the advancement of higher

education in developing countries', handled requests for staffing.<sup>39</sup> Whilst the final decision to appoint candidates was with the appointing university, it is clear from the archives that a few British geographers – notably R.O. Buchanan of the London School of Economics and Robert Steel of Oxford and Liverpool – wielded significant influence in this process.

Steel – lecturer in colonial geography at Oxford, and later professor at Liverpool – began his career-spanning interests in Africa with fieldwork in Sierra Leone in the 1930s. This led to his membership of the Ashanti Survey team, a social and political survey supported by the Colonial Research Council, colonial government and Ashanti Confederacy Council.<sup>40</sup> His influence, in both Britain and Africa, was shaped by his roles on committees of learned societies, including the Institute of British Geographers, the Geographical Association, the IUC and the Royal African Society. R.O. Buchanan was born in New Zealand and came to Britain in 1925 to study at the LSE, where he was later chair of geography. Buchanan was one of the founders of the Institute of British Geographers and, like Steel, served on several committees throughout his career including the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Geographical Association and the British Association for the Advancement of Science.<sup>41</sup> These connections, combined with the hierarchical and informal processes of academic appointments across Britain and the wider colonial world, put both in pivotal positions for hiring decisions in Nigeria and for geographers seeking to (re)join UK academia.

Steel regularly received requests for suggestions for appointments from contacts working in African universities.<sup>42</sup> Many of those at Ibadan were appointed on recommendation: he was referee for Terry Coppock, visiting scholar at Ibadan 1964-1965, and advised Dick Hodder (lecturer at Ibadan 1956-1962) on how to make the necessary connections to apply.<sup>43</sup> He was on the selection panel for the chair of geography and head of department role, appointing Michael Barbour to the position in 1962.<sup>44</sup> Steel's archives abound with informal letters reflecting the continuing value of 'writing to friends' in the appointments process across the former colonies in Africa, South East Asia and the Caribbean until the 1960s.<sup>45</sup>

Table 1 shows the total number of British academic faculty who worked in Ibadan geography from 1949 to 1993, the last being Gina Porter, who left in 1982. These British geographers dominated in the early years but the department became increasingly Nigerianised from the 1960s onwards, with the first Nigerian lecturer appointed being Akin Mabogunje, a former UCI undergraduate. Students continued to be taught by British geographers, including Michael Barbour, Rowland Moss and Dick Hodder, as well as a whole range of visiting lecturers from the US, Australia, Sweden, the UK and elsewhere (including the American Ed Soja, visiting for a term from Northwestern University) throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>46</sup> The vast majority of permanent staff were either British or Nigerian, and the department grew in size during this period and was staffed by a total of more than thirty Nigerians from 1958 (when Mabogunje was appointed to his first lecturing post) to the early 1990s. Many of the Nigerian staff were trained either in Britain (mainly in the 1950s and 1960s) or at Ibadan, and worked in the department for most of their academic careers.

### (Anti)colonial pioneers and professional development: careers in geography during decolonisation

Students studying geography were taught initially by the British duo of Keith Buchanan and John Pugh, teaching human and physical geography respectively. Buchanan came from a lectureship at Pietermaritzburg in South Africa, travelling north with his family because 'they could not accept the attitude of the Nationalist Government towards the non-whites'. Buchanan was a colourful character who refused to conform to the expectations of senior university administrators. According to his colleague Pugh, Buchanan 'had a wide range of acquaintances in Ibadan Town ... and never hesitated if he saw a party of drummers heading somewhere – he would follow ...'. He would wear shirts 'made from cloth from the local market with a pattern of rosebuds or Crown birds'.<sup>47</sup> His lectures touched on issues of colonialism and development, and showed signs of the more radical critiques of his later scholarship.<sup>48</sup> Eventually the UCI principal deemed that Buchanan's clothing showed he was inappropriate for the job, leading to his departure in 1951 for LSE, then what was to become the University of Wellington in New Zealand.<sup>49</sup>

Buchanan's story – of radical political commitment and local engagement – is not however representative of the early faculty at Ibadan. If we turn to John Pugh, Buchanan's first colleague, a different story emerges. Following an undergraduate degree at Cambridge, Pugh arrived in Nigeria as a result of wartime service in the Royal Engineers and later the Colonial Office, where his role was to carry out mining surveys. Pugh remained in Nigeria following the war to continue surveying for the colonial government, and in this role he was involved in both the primary triangulation of the country, and in teaching Nigerian surveyors at the Survey School at Oyo.<sup>50</sup> It was from here that he was asked to join the new geography department. Pugh therefore arrived in Nigeria courtesy of the war, and remained as part of the colonial service. He did not actively make the decision to travel, nor was his a move prompted by political commitments. Rather, like many in this period, his career trajectory was shaped by war and then by the on-going opportunities that colonial service offered. In the early years, the department had close links to the Nigerian Colonial Service, and to geographical knowledge – through survey and agriculture – for colonial development.

In the late 1940s a career in geography overseas could be framed within a broader tradition of colonial service, embracing both the excitement and responsibility associated with empire roles. In an address to the Geographical Association in 1947 Alexander Carr-Saunders, chairman of the IUC 'pointed to the new, interesting and even exciting opportunities' that now existed for geographers in colonial universities. These new institutions offered 'the attraction and responsibility attached to pioneering' he noted, 'We have not failed [in the past] as a nation to find men to shoulder our national responsibilities overseas'.<sup>51</sup> The implication was that working in these academic posts should be understood in similar terms: as service in less developed places with the added excitement of being a colonial pioneer. These were gendered opportunities: it was men who (in this account) had taken on these responsibilities in the past and would do so again. The 1945 commission which had recommended the founding of Ibadan was also explicit about this: 'Any institution or institutions in West Africa will have to ... rely on European staff for the most part upon young men who will go out to West Africa to seek new opportunities'.<sup>52</sup> This sense of pioneering, in institutional and research terms, is present in the accounts of the early faculty at Ibadan. Pugh utilized the term, 'pioneer



fringe', in a letter to R.O. Buchanan in 1956, and Barbour, writing to Steel in 1960 to discuss his failure to be appointed to a lecturing position in Nairobi, Kenya, noted: 'I was disappointed of course, because it had seemed a perfect chance to do geography of the kind I like, in an almost virgin field'.<sup>53</sup>

When discussing his reasons for undertaking a PhD at Makerere in Uganda, Tony O'Connor (later a lecturer at Ibadan), noted that 'in 1960 Africa was THE story'.<sup>54</sup> However, in the archival record, pragmatic decisions regarding the opportunities and challenges of positions in Nigeria and the other new university colleges dominate over any sense of mission, political engagement or excitement over decolonisation. As Dick Hodder recorded, for example, 'I had no religious or political motivation in going abroad, nor did I have any strong interest in development. Indeed, having once decided to enter academic life, my motivation in going was that at 28 and with a wife and child I could not face going to Hull on £450 a year'. Initially working in Singapore at the University of Malaya, Hodder 'became keen to move to an African university in 1954-5' to develop his CV for a move back to the UK: 'I felt that to widen my field experience in this way would give me a better chance of competing in the British academic market'.<sup>55</sup> Barbour also took a role in Africa as a way to progress his career. As he recorded, 'Job in Khartoum seen as a means of entry without D.Phil. etc. to academic life – intention to try in due course for jobs in U.K. or Commonwealth'.<sup>56</sup> Hodder and Barbour weren't alone in working in multiple colonial contexts, nearly forty percent (seven of eighteen) of the British staff who worked at Ibadan had previously worked in other universities across Africa, South East Asia and New Zealand.

Of the jobs available overseas, Ibadan was regarded as a superior opportunity. On arrival there, Barbour wrote approvingly to Steel that it compared positively to his previous appointment in Khartoum, Sudan, in terms of both 'morale' and 'material' conditions.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, reflecting towards the end of their careers, both Barbour and Hodder argued that in the early 1960s Ibadan was a substantial centre for research 'as serious re: academic life as UCL' [University College London], with 'the quality of discussion and research ... quite remarkable'.<sup>58</sup> This atmosphere attracted and contributed to the careers of those such as Mansell Prothero, Dick Hodder, John Pugh and Bill Morgan who returned to positions at Liverpool, Birmingham and the University of London. In addition, many young geographers who would go on to have a high profile in the UK and US were attracted to Ibadan for visiting positions.<sup>59</sup>

Ibadan also had good benefits, high pay and good support for research.<sup>60</sup> 'Leave every year for expatriate staff', provided to prevent academic isolation, was seen by British faculty as central to the 'intellectual vigour and resilience of the institution', though it was not extended to local faculty, something which caused some considerable discontent.<sup>61</sup> To these institutional benefits could also be added the lifestyle possible for department members in Ibadan. Though in the early years before the permanent university buildings were complete conditions could be basic, by the late 1950s they had improved significantly.<sup>62</sup> Soon after arriving in 1962, Barbour wrote to Steel that 'Life is full and quite jolly here. Jane [Barbour, his wife, also a geographer by training] and I are just getting into regular tennis fours, which is nice, and there is good swimming nearby; very soon there will be a College pool that we can use, staff only'.<sup>63</sup>

In many cases male academics travelled with their families to Ibadan. Many of the wives of geography staff members worked as teachers in Nigeria, as well as looking after children, and contributing in other ways to university life. For example, Jane Barbour, who had worked as a meteorologist during the war, later published work on Nigerian textiles based on research she conducted whilst accompanying her husband to Ibadan.<sup>64</sup> She also contributed to the publication of the *Nigerian Geographical Journal*, preparing the indexes.<sup>65</sup> Though this aspect of academic support is recorded in a journal acknowledgement, much other informal academic labour by wives and other family members at Ibadan is not recorded.

### Creating elite spaces

Life as an academic at Nigeria's premier university meant being part of a colonial and post-colonial elite, an atmosphere and position that the university's architects, administrators and students were keen to protect.<sup>66</sup> The development of UCI as an elite space involved not only the construction of iconic university buildings but also the everyday conduct of the lecturers and their families, which worked to reinforce the divisions between the university, including its new students, and the town.<sup>67</sup> This was perhaps why Keith Buchanan's behaviour was seen as so threatening: by meeting people in Ibadan town he unsettled the important division between the elite status of the university and the city after which it was named.

Much of the labour of producing the elite space of the university was done by women. In addition to undertaking paid work and some of the unglamorous administration associated with the university, they created family homes, and held key roles in university societies and associational life.<sup>68</sup> Alongside her job as a school teacher, Cambridge geography graduate Margaret Pugh found time to grow flowers and tropical fruits in the garden of the family's staff accommodation, and to star in annual opera performances staged by UCI staff. Her gardening was part of a wider transformation of the UCI campus into a typical British-style university landscape, and her musical roles contributed to an anglophile social landscape to match. Alongside opera, the social calendar included drinks receptions and parties, including one in which the young unmarried geographer Mansell Prothero was 'made up ... as a Red Indian brave' for a fancy dress party (this included providing 'thin pyjama trousers and a feathered head-dress' and applying 'war-paint (lipstick) on his chest').<sup>69</sup> The same party also led to controversy, as one British academic chose as his costume local Yoruba robes, offending some of the Nigerians present.

These informal practices highlight both the active labour involved in the making of an elite university space, and the tensions within that project, not only between the university community and the local population, but also within the university's staff body, where British expatriate lecturers dominated throughout the 1950s, and casual racism was often observed.<sup>70</sup> Whilst these tensions are not often recorded explicitly in the archival records, John Pugh noted that, at Ibadan, 'with some [Nigerian] staff colleagues, one was not able (allowed?) to forget that one was white'.<sup>71</sup>

According to Michael Chisholm, who was a visiting lecturer in the department 1964-1965, though 'at an interpersonal level in the department ... we all got along perfectly well' some British lecturers failed to make close relationships with Nigerian colleagues,

struggling with different cultures of hospitality, and socialising in different spaces. A weekend away, (visiting an inselberg at Idanre) alongside a Nigerian colleague Reuben (known as Ken) Udo was for Chisholm 'actually rather special' because it 'was the only time that I recollect that there was that kind of association'. Social life on campus revolved around a staff club with swimming pool and restaurant, which were still in the early 1960s distinctly white. Udo remembers that 'the club was actually a white club when I came here [in 1963], there were very few Nigerians'.<sup>72</sup> Chisholm provides further detail:

[O]n a Sunday, at about midday you could get that day's airmail edition of the *Sunday Times*. ... The only day of the week that you could read an English newspaper on the same day it was published. And the Staff Club was the social focus for academics, but it was more the expatriates who were there rather than the indigenous.

Though there was no colour bar at the club or the university throughout its history, the academic staff (for whom the club was reserved) remained dominated by non-Nigerians well into the 1960s. Moreover, the social atmosphere offered by the club was distinctly Western, with British newspapers and gin and tonic flowing at the bar.<sup>73</sup> The persistence of such forms of segregated associational life even after independence highlights the making of the university campus as an elite and still racialised space, though by the 1970s the club was increasingly utilised by Nigerian academics.

#### Becoming geographers of/in Nigeria: teaching and research

British academics working at Ibadan brought with them not only the university culture but also the disciplinary traditions of geography in the UK. Their research interests shaped what areas of geography were taught at university level in Nigeria and the structures of teaching reflected those of the University of London. But the experience of working in Nigeria also shaped the research interests of those same geographers, and the travel of ideas and knowledge was multi-directional. Many of those working at Ibadan became 'experts' in the geography of Nigeria, converted by their experience into West African, tropical, or, later, 'development' specialists.<sup>74</sup>

Several faculty members arrived with little knowledge of Nigeria or even West Africa, and were sent on a tour of the country in the department's vehicle so they would be in a better position to teach about its human and physical geography.<sup>75</sup> Mansell Prothero, arriving in Nigeria as an expert in UK land use (and promptly being sent on tour), was transformed into a migration and health expert, a shift that lasted his whole career:

The excitement of being in that young Geography Department at Ibadan in the early 1950s ... led in particular to his studies of seasonal labour migration from Sokoto, NW Nigeria, and of Land use in Soba (in *Economic Geography*, 1957) that were early major conceptual markers in African geography.<sup>76</sup>

Some, like Pugh, gained their PhDs whilst at Ibadan, meaning that their doctorates focused on Nigeria (Pugh's on the country's geomorphology). Later publications based on doctoral research often followed. Pugh published on everything from 'fringing pediments and marginal depressions' to 'river captures' and 'sand movement' in Nigeria

throughout the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>77</sup> Others like Bill Morgan and Dick Hodder brought an interest in Africa to Nigeria, but developed this substantially at Ibadan. Morgan's PhD had explored Malawi (then Nyasaland) and his years in Nigeria cemented his position as an Africanist. Hodder's time in Nigeria refocused his interests in economic development in the tropical world from Asia (where he had been lecturing before Ibadan) to Africa, where they remained throughout his career.<sup>78</sup>

The methods, approaches and curriculum used by Ibadan faculty closely mirrored those of British geography, through which the majority of British, but also later Nigerian, staff were trained. Initially research reflected the regional tradition of description and synthesis still dominant in Britain in the mid twentieth century.<sup>79</sup> This included a focus on land utilisation as well as on describing landscape change over time, themes which dominated the work of two titans of geography: H.C. Darby and Dudley Stamp. At Ibadan, local variants of these traditions emerged that produced descriptive regional work with an emphasis on West Africa, historical studies and, increasingly, an interest in population, economic, urban and agricultural change, land use mapping and the development of infrastructure.<sup>80</sup>

Buchanan and Pugh's 1955 *Land and People in Nigeria* provides a good example of the typical output of staff at Ibadan. This textbook was used on university courses, including at Ibadan, but also in schools in Nigeria and the UK. It includes chapters on physical geography and climate, resources and land use, transport, communications and services, and, intriguingly, 'The Future'. Though the volume was published just five years before independence, and soon after the implementation of a new constitution (providing more but still limited power to Nigerian politicians), this final chapter, just two pages long, makes no explicit mention of the challenges and opportunities of political change. Rather, it focuses on the need for more modern intensive farming methods and population redistribution to feed and manage a rapidly growing population, and the requirement for increased education and health provision to guarantee agricultural efficiency. The chapter advocates a middle way in colonial development, with a continuing role for white communities and the colonial power. This was required, according to the authors, because of the 'attitudes and abilities of Nigerians', who, due to a lack of education under colonialism, were not entrepreneurial or willing to invest in modern developments. Indeed, the index only records five pages on politics ('Political organisation') which describe the system of colonial governance, just one more page than is accorded to 'fruit', which is also supplemented by separate entries for 'Bananas, coconuts, fruit canning, fruit squash manufacture, melons, pineapples'. The politics of race, development and decolonisation are almost entirely absent from the book, even if occasional sentences – for example, mention that the increasing trend of social segregation of the white population from the black is 'fraught with danger' – demonstrate a concern for these issues.<sup>81</sup>

Studies describing the impacts of colonisation on agriculture and settlements, but ignoring the politics of (de)colonisation were common throughout the 1950s. Those focusing on contemporary issues framed them through notions of 'development' but were silent on the politics of this and took for granted who would lead this process. For example, Roland Moss described land-use mapping as 'a basic necessity for all development'.<sup>82</sup> In this, he followed in the tradition of 'land utilisation' pioneered by Stamp

in Britain in the 1930s, where these surveys were seen similarly as valuable for 'providing a cartographic base upon which efficient and orderly land-use planning could proceed'.<sup>83</sup>

By the 1960s, teaching and research increasingly reflected new disciplinary directions, but continued to be animated by 'the apparent need to address oneself to problems bearing upon future development' in Africa.<sup>84</sup> Hodder's work on markets in western Nigeria reflected the quantitative turn and its early transformation of economic geography, whilst work by Morgan, on transport, and the visiting lecturers Terry Coppock and Ed Soja, on agriculture and modernization surfaces respectively, also drew on quantitative methods.<sup>85</sup> These quantitative accounts, alongside on-going land-use and population surveys were increasingly cast as central to Nigeria's post-colonial development, and were advanced by a new generation of Nigerian geographers who came to dominate the department by the 1970s.

These new methods were understood by the Nigerian academics at the time as relevant for successful decolonisation and development. However, unlike in the history department, which in this period developed the distinctive Ibadan School of African History drawing on novel methodologies to question Western epistemologies, geographers at Ibadan generally followed dominant disciplinary approaches.<sup>86</sup> But while the focus of the curriculum didn't change dramatically, beyond the inclusion of quantitative geography, there were other changes which made a substantial difference to teaching and learning. The early 1960s decision to open up the honours degree pathway to all students (where before it had been reserved for a select few) was understood by Akin Mabogunje very much in terms of the decolonisation of student learning.<sup>87</sup> Tony O'Connor at Ibadan in the late 1960s and early 1970s also looked beyond the curriculum for what decolonisation meant: 'Broadly, of course "decolonisation" primarily meant the shift from UK to local staff ... otherwise I'm more aware of continuity than of change'.<sup>88</sup>

#### 'Africanisation'

Despite sustained calls for the appointment of more Nigerians to academic roles throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, in 1962 of six lecturers, only one – Akin Mabogunje – was Nigerian.<sup>89</sup> This was a source of frustration for some African lecturers, who complained publically about the position, as well as about substantial disparities in pay between 'expatriate' and 'local' staff. Africanisation had always been a stated aim of the university authorities, but had unfolded (for many) unacceptably slowly throughout the 1950s. In 1962, two years after Nigeria itself, UCI became an independent university, and a new Nigerian principal – Kenneth Dike – was appointed. The university could now create new departments and adapt its curricula without reference to London.<sup>90</sup> This change was hugely important symbolically but it also made a substantial material difference to life at Ibadan, with increasing opportunities for Nigerians. Between 1962 and 1968 staff numbers rose in the geography department, with many of the new appointments Nigerian. By 1968 the staff had grown to eight, and half were Nigerian – R.A. Akinola (urban geography), R.C. Duru (International Atlas of West Africa) and R.K. Udo (rural settlement) having joined Mabogunje (urban geography).<sup>91</sup> For Nigerians in this period, there were 'good hopes of rapid promotion'.<sup>92</sup> A background of training in the UK held a particular cachet for Nigerian staff, although the opportunity to be supervised at Ibadan by the rising star Mabogunje also held prestige.

For British academics considering roles in African universities, the situation was by this time less certain. As Steel wrote to Barbour in 1960, 'there are all the uncertainties of the future of Kenya, and I can see a very special difficulty for the liberal-minded European in years to come. The extreme Right and the extreme Left may survive, but the chaps in the middle may find it particularly difficult'.<sup>93</sup> The position varied in different countries. In independent Ghana, under an increasingly radical Nkrumah, it was clear by 1960 that Ghanaian leadership was required for the geography department. E.A. Boateng (Steel's former student, alongside Barbour, at Oxford) was duly appointed, with Steel writing that 'It was clear to me that [the temporary incumbent, the British T.E.] Hilton's appointment to the Chair would have been wrong from the African and student point of view'.<sup>94</sup> Whilst for some British staff working at these universities this could be a time of anxiety, for others it was exciting. For Tony O'Connor, visiting Ibadan in 1967, and then again in 1972-1973, 'The gradual shift from expat to local staff added to the delight of working in these universities. At Makerere in 1960-62 the ratio was about 6/3, while at Dar [es Salaam] in 1978 it was 2/8'.<sup>95</sup>

Despite these concerns in Ghana and Kenya, in early 1960s Nigeria there were still opportunities for British academics. Nigeria's post-colonial government was close to the West and, as a result, international funding continued to pour into Ibadan.<sup>96</sup> When a new head of department was appointed in 1962 the search still focused on British academics, and Michael Barbour, a lecturer at University College London, was duly chosen. However, Barbour was also appointed, rather than the temporary incumbent, because he 'came with an open mind for changes'. Mabogunje, reflecting on this period, suggests that: 'In effect that transition ... to Barbour would be the beginning of the decolonisation'.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, as the 1960s progressed, the position of non-Nigerian heads of department, whatever their outlook became increasingly incongruous: 'there was some feeling in the university that where you have two professors ... the Nigerian professor should really become head of the department'. Mabogunje was promoted to professor in 1965, but preferred research and international roles to the administrative burden of a departmental headship. Instead the two formed a productive partnership, with Barbour deferring to Mabogunje when necessary; as the latter remembers, 'any major decisions he ha[d] a way of asking my views'.<sup>98</sup> Barbour also described this relationship in positive terms at the time, with the only concern he expressed being that he would have to fill in on Mabogunje's economic geography course whilst the latter was on sabbatical!<sup>99</sup> In his research and writing, which remained in the genre of regional tropical geography, Barbour was hardly central to any debate (let alone critique) of empire and decolonisation. However, in his everyday practice he was an active part of it: administering a decolonising geography department, overseeing the shift to locally demanded honours degrees and the Nigerianisation of staff, and working productively with some Nigerian colleagues.<sup>100</sup>

### LEAVING IBADAN

Very few British academics remained employed at African universities for their whole careers. Just as the reasons for taking roles at Ibadan more often reflected the vagaries of the job market than any sort of political commitment, so too did the decision to return or continue their careers elsewhere. Most had seen a role at Ibadan as a stepping stone rather than a permanent position, and most returned to roles in the UK, though at least six British Ibadan faculty took up positions elsewhere in the Commonwealth, including in

Australia, New Zealand and Canada, demonstrating the continuing pertinence of the colonial British academic world into the 1960s.<sup>101</sup> John Pugh, writing to R.O. Buchanan about the advantages of a move to King's College London in 1956, noted that they were '1. translation from the "pioneer fringe" to a major university; 2. Good library facilities – these are very limited here'.<sup>102</sup> However, there were negatives of a move to the UK, in a letter to another future colleague Pugh noted, 'I have quoted my present salary scale, but realize that any transfer to Britain must involve some decrease'.<sup>103</sup> Returning provided better career opportunities but was often also associated with a lowering of living standards, something commonly reported by colonial servants following their return to Britain.<sup>104</sup>

Pugh's move from Ibadan to King's College London was facilitated by the small network of geographers that was so central to staffing Ibadan. Dudley Stamp and R.O. Buchanan of the LSE (where at this time, geography was taught jointly with King's) put forward Pugh's name.<sup>105</sup> Ibadan remained part of British geography's academic world through the 1950s and 1960s. These connections continued to matter: Steel recruited Mansell Prothero for his geography department at Liverpool; and when Pugh was head of department at King's, he brought to his department Bill Morgan, who he had known at Ibadan. Prior to his move to King's, Morgan and Moss worked and published together at the University of Birmingham.<sup>106</sup> As Tamson Pietsch notes, 'Personal relationships developed in ... common rooms and laboratories were carried with academics when they migrated', and academic geographers thus pursued their careers, and secured positions, in the UK based on contacts and experience forged in Nigeria.<sup>107</sup>

Whilst many geographers wanted to return to the UK after a few years working at Ibadan, by the end of the 1960s, these positions abroad were diminishing in number and prestige. Hugh Clout, then a young member of the department at UCL, remembers being warned against taking a role in one of the new universities in the former colonies, which could damage a promising career.<sup>108</sup> Though the IUC was still recruiting for overseas universities in the 1970s, they were also increasingly being called upon to provide funding to assist academics hoping to return to work in Britain. In light of political instability in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, the IUC chairman reported that 'Increasing use is being made in the current circumstances, of the IUC provisions for helping staff forced to leave their overseas posts for political reasons outside their own control'.<sup>109</sup> And whilst many places did not see the levels of disruption and violence seen in East and West Africa, departments in decolonising countries were, by 1970, far less likely to consider appointing British academics. A twenty-year period of opportunities in the British colonial and post-colonial world was coming to an end.

### Impact in Britain

In 1972 a disciplinary review of UK geography noted that there were 'about 50 staff members with recent experience of teaching in tropical African universities' in British geography departments.<sup>110</sup> Africa dominated as a result of broader colonial dynamics: 'there may well be more Africanist geographers' noted Ben Farmer a year later, 'because of the teaching opportunities till recently available in ex-British territories' in Africa, which were 'by and large denied or absent' in most of South East Asia.<sup>111</sup> For Tony O'Connor 'The impact of my African experience was huge.'<sup>112</sup> Although not everyone continued to conduct research in Africa once they returned to Britain, the opportunities afforded by the

development of colonial higher education shaped the regional interests of geographers in post-war Britain and resulted in the production of significant research outputs. An obituary of Dick Hodder records that 'his years in Nigeria provided experience which would source the analysis of a number of books on African economic and political development'; and West Africa remained central in the work of Prothero, Moss, Morgan and Barbour amongst others.<sup>113</sup> For many returnees their time in African universities resulted in connections that were sustained through a range of academic practices: external examination (for example John Pugh in Ghana and at Ibadan); research visits and visiting professorships (for Bill Morgan in Nigeria; Rowland Moss in West, East and South Africa); consultancy for international agencies (such as Mansell Prothero for the WHO); and supervision of African PhD students.<sup>114</sup>

Returnees were also central in the foundation of several new research centres at British universities. Following the 1961 publication of the government commissioned Hayter Report, selected universities were chosen to act as centres for 'area studies'.<sup>115</sup> Bill Morgan, who moved to the geography department at the University of Birmingham from Ibadan in 1959, 'played a significant role in the founding [in 1963] and early development of the Centre of West African Studies' there, alongside another Ibadan colleague, Roland Moss.<sup>116</sup> Morgan was also one of the founder members of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom (in 1963), and an early chair of the Developing Areas Study Group, founded in 1973.<sup>117</sup> In these roles, Morgan was not unusual. The geographer David McMaster, formerly of the University College of Makerere, Uganda was also central to the other Centre for Africa Studies founded in response to Hayter, and in the early 1970s geographers filled three principal officer roles at the African Studies Association and were 'the second largest group' of the organisation's overall membership.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the 'Africa-wide experience' also made it possible for Tony O'Connor 'to act as Secretary/Vice-Chair of the UK Standing Committee on University Studies of Africa, and later the European Council on African Studies'.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1960s, area studies, and the study of 'developing areas', became more formalised in the UK. In part these changes reflected broader geopolitical and educational shifts, a desire on behalf of the UK government not to lose its competitive advantage in expertise about developing areas as it withdrew from the colonies, and a concomitant rise in interest in area studies in the US reflecting Cold War concerns.<sup>120</sup> But the founding of such centres and associations, as well as the building up of African, or South East Asian, expertise in particular departments also reflected the interests of a large group of academics, geographers amongst them, who had worked in the colonial universities. They in turn taught a whole new generation of Africanists and development geographers who studied in these departments in the 1960s and 1970s. Such regional teaching enriched the academic life of those who had spent periods living and researching in Africa.<sup>121</sup>

Through university teaching, experience in Ibadan made an impact beyond individual research. John Pugh and Bill Morgan contributed to the regional geography of Africa courses at King's College London. These covered:

the physical environment, its evolution and distinctive features, peoples and colonisation, natural resources and the distribution of economic activities, the



interaction of physical and human elements in the evolution of the cultural landscape.<sup>122</sup>

A student who took the course in the early 1970s remembers that 'it was like the old regional geography, in that each topic was covered thematically. So you'd have agricultural change, mining ..., the role of transport, urbanisation, and so on...', though by the 1970s the focus on post-colonial development was more pronounced, and the course covered 'the scope for development now that they [African countries] are independent'.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the pace of political change and the increasingly political nature of debates about Africa in this period, King's students of the time 'don't remember [lecturers] ... talking about politics [or] ... the contrast between rich and poor'. However, the fact that many lecturers had experience of West Africa was a draw: 'the reason why I took the ... course in the second year, was because I knew ... that they had some sort of connection with Africa'. Moreover, this fact affected the way that the material was represented in class: 'I think because they'd worked there, they knew Nigeria, for example, was different from Ghana, and they were interested in the difference between Nigeria and Ghana, in why they were different'.<sup>124</sup>

Gina Porter, who was taught by Mansell Prothero and Robert Steel as an undergraduate at the University of Liverpool, remembers:

Liverpool was very Africa focused. So my undergraduate teaching ... had been Africa focused. There was a whole group of people who'd worked in sub-Saharan Africa, and postgrads too .... So I suppose that I was pretty much steeped in it ... and there were African research students too. So I had a friend from Cameroon, from Sudan ....

As a result of this teaching, Porter developed an interest in Africa, and specifically northern Nigeria which has spanned her whole academic career, leading directly to the decision to work in Nigerian universities, including at Ibadan, for more than a decade from 1974, before she returned to the UK and the University of Durham.<sup>125</sup> In this, she, and many others, benefitted from 'Steel's active support and assistance'.<sup>126</sup>

Regional courses continued to be taught into the late 1970s at the University of London and beyond, despite the fact that by 1972, twenty-four percent of departments claimed to have already 'given up the teaching of regional geography' altogether, in favour of 'Systematic geography based on quantitative methods'.<sup>127</sup> Former Ibadan staff did not fall on one side of the disciplinary debates between regional geography and new quantitative methodologies that dominated the 1960s. Pugh and Barbour were often seen as representing traditional regional description, but Hodder – who returned from Ibadan in 1963 and spent most of the rest of his career at School of Oriental and African Studies – was associated with the new interdisciplinary area studies and a focus on economic and political change. Michael Chisholm, Terry Coppock and Ed Soja, at Ibadan in the 1960s, along with their Nigerian colleague Akin Mabogunje, were associated with the new quantitative and theoretical geography.<sup>128</sup> A wide range of different threads fed into the new geography of 'developing areas' emerging in the 1970s. These quite different approaches to teaching about 'development' or 'Africa' often co-existed within one

department or even course (albeit not always entirely happily!).<sup>129</sup> At Liverpool in the late 1960s and early 1970s these debates were vigorous and exciting:

There was a whole younger cohort in the department who were very critical of Robert Steel and people like that, of course, and that was also what made it very interesting. All those debates about what was development about? What is it about? And what should people's position be if they went out to work in those locations? Do they have a place at all?<sup>130</sup>

Textbooks were another important way in which experiences in the (former) colonies impacted upon the teaching of geography in Britain, as well as in Africa. Carr-Saunders, speaking to the Geographical Association in 1947, had cautioned that academic research might have to come after 'the preparation of material for urgent teaching needs'.<sup>131</sup> Many turned these teaching materials, alongside their academic research, into textbooks. Pugh co-authored *Land and People in Nigeria* (1955) with his first colleague at Ibadan, Keith Buchanan, and *West Africa* with Morgan. British lecturers at other colonial university colleges also wrote standard texts on Ghana and the Sudan, national atlases, and later more systematic accounts.<sup>132</sup> *Land and People in Nigeria*, 'a classic in Third World regional Geography', continued to be used in Nigeria for much longer than the UK, remaining in 2004, according to Reuben (Ken) Udo, 'the best regional text on Nigeria'.<sup>133</sup> In representing the geography of African countries to more than one generation of Nigerian school and university students (as well as students in the UK), these textbooks, very often authored by British academics, made a substantial contribution to the disciplinary imagination of Africa in this period.<sup>134</sup>

Experience in the colonial university colleges could also creep into teaching in less obvious ways. Bill Morgan remembers that at King's College, John Pugh 'used to surprise students with his account of the disease problems one could encounter in tropical conditions'. On the annual surveying fieldtrip one former student reminisced:

After taking measurements for most of the day, the evenings were spent reducing the observations to seemingly endless braced quadrilaterals, interspersed with stories of what John called 'real surveying' or 'getting your legs brown'. It was the stuff of heroes, of the lone surveyor, his faithful booker and a gang of assistants setting off into the African bush for months on end, and returning only when the task was complete. His students were enthralled as this ex-colonial surveyor told tales of great daring and endurance.<sup>135</sup>

Returnees sometimes brought with them not only knowledge and interest in Africa, but also memories, recounted and passed on to students. Particularly for those who worked in the colonial colleges in the earlier years before independence, these memories could be of colonial service, and could reproduce notions of geography as a masculine, heroic, expeditionary science, and Africa as exotic and sometimes threatening.<sup>136</sup> These reflect longstanding understandings of the spaces of empire, and the role of the geographer within them. A consideration of the careers of academics returning from positions in the (post)colonies demonstrates how colonial disciplinary practices were actively performed to a new generation of students far beyond the timelines of formal decolonisation.

The association of some returning geographers with the British empire was passed on through lectures and informal conversations, though the 'colonial' – understood positively and negatively – could also be conveyed (or assumed) by younger colleagues or students by the very fact of a career path that had passed through Africa.<sup>137</sup> Some of Barbour's Nigerian colleagues felt him to be committed to the project of decolonisation.<sup>138</sup> Yet when he returned briefly to University College London, before taking up a permanent position at the University of Ulster, Barbour was viewed by some as a 'colonial'. It was his years at Ibadan, and Khartoum before that, combined with a particular manner and an old fashioned approach to scholarship, that produced this indictment.<sup>139</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article has explored three distinct engagements of geographers with decolonisation. First, British geographers' careers were shaped in important ways by the geopolitical shift. Working in the colonial universities provided a first lecturing role, the opportunity to extend the regional focus of research, and practical experience running courses and departments through which to develop careers. Working at Ibadan provided the freedoms afforded by expatriate life, although decisions to take on roles there, and to leave, could also be based on economic necessities or personal circumstances, pushing people away from home or bringing them back.<sup>140</sup> Following a cohort of careering geographers highlights both the social and embodied nature of academic work, and the ways that ideas, connections, friendships and commitments were carried through entire careers, continuing to shape the practice of geography beyond formal decolonisation.<sup>141</sup> These connections, and broader 'cultures of academic sociability', could be productive but also exclude.<sup>142</sup>

Second, these experiences in turn shaped the discipline of geography in the (post)colonial world and the UK. Returning to positions in UK academia, geographers brought back longstanding academic interests in the places where they had worked, which contributed to the shape and regional focus of what was to become development geography, as well as to the area studies project in the UK. They produced textbooks and courses that reflected these interests and passed them on to another generation of geographers. They applied quantitative approaches to Nigeria, as well as regional tropical accounts that continued to shape representations of West Africa throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Here we have focused less on theoretical debates and more on the everyday work of academic geography – hiring, teaching, textbooks, course outlines, departmental administration, university regulations, subject associations. These more mundane ways of doing geography also contributed to the significant disciplinary changes wrought in this period.

Third, we argue that geographers' work at colonial universities and in Britain was not only influenced by, but was itself part of the process of decolonisation. As employees of universities that started as late colonial development projects and became much-prized post-colonial institutions, academics and the universities they worked in were visible embodiments of the decolonising and developmental state.<sup>143</sup> In the disjuncture between the different versions of Michael Barbour – as colonial relic or practitioner of decolonisation – we can see evidence of the ways that work in the (former) colonial universities could be interpreted. In part, these different interpretations flow from the different kinds of evidence used. Disciplinary histories tend to focus on publications, and,

in the context of empire, decolonisation and development, on contributions to either the pursuit, or the radical critique, of these processes. Yet decolonisation was (and is) not only about publications, but also about everyday academic practices. How departments were run and people were appointed and treated were as much part of the practice of decolonisation as academic writing. As demonstrated in this paper, alongside publications, we must take seriously the everyday work of geographers, as mentors, teachers, supervisors and colleagues, in assessing the interconnections between geography and decolonisation.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Craggs, Postcolonial geographies, decolonization, and the performance of geopolitics at Commonwealth conferences, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35 (2014) 39–55.

<sup>2</sup>F. Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*, Oxford, 2001.

<sup>3</sup>R. Butlin, *Geographies of Empire: European Imperialism and Colonialism c. 1880–1960*, Cambridge, 1999.

<sup>4</sup>M. Power and J.D. Sidaway, The degeneration of tropical geography, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94 (2004) 588.

<sup>5</sup>T. Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1940*, Manchester, 2013; T. Pietsch, Wandering scholars? Academic mobility and the British World, 1850–1940, *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010) 377–387; H. Jöns, The University of Cambridge, academic expertise and the British empire, 1885–1962, *Environment and Planning A* 48 (2016) 94–114; M. Heffernan and H. Jöns, Research travel and disciplinary identities in the University of Cambridge, 1885–1955, *The British Journal for the History of Science* 46 (2013) 255–286.

<sup>6</sup>J.M. Hodge, British colonial expertise, post-colonial careerism and the early history of international development, *Journal of Modern European History* 8 (2010) 24–46; R. Craggs and H. Neate, Post-colonial careerism and urban policy mobility: between Britain and Nigeria 1945–1990, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42 (2017) 44–57.

<sup>7</sup>Jöns and Heffernan, Research travel and disciplinary identities; T. Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development*, Cambridge, 2017; Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*.

<sup>8</sup>Inter University Council (IUC), Papers of Robert Steel, University of Liverpool (hereafter RS), D91/4/8/10-19; I.C.M. Maxwell, The changing pattern of universities in developing countries, *World Development* 2 (1974) 37–39.

<sup>9</sup>Indian universities, where hiring practices involved civil servants rather than academics, and independence movements had an earlier impact, followed quite a different trajectory to these new institutions. See Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 70–71, 78; A. Stockwell, 'The crucible of the Malayan Nation': the university and the making of a new Malaya, 1938–62, *Modern Asian Studies* 43 (2008) 1149–1187. F. Agbodeka, *A History of University of Ghana: Half a Century of Higher Education 1948–1998*, Accra, 1998.

<sup>10</sup>Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*.

<sup>11</sup>D. Low and J. Lonsdale, Introduction, in: D. Low and A. Smith (Eds), *The Oxford History of East Africa*, Oxford, 1976, 1–64.

<sup>12</sup>R. Craggs and C. Wintle, Introduction: reframing cultures of decolonisation, in: R. Craggs and C. Wintle (Eds), *Cultures of Decolonisation: Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945–1970*, Manchester, 2016, 3 and Craggs and Neate, Post-colonial careerism and urban policy mobility.

<sup>13</sup>M. Ayoob, Inequality and theorizing in international relations: the case for subaltern realism, *International Studies Review* 4 (2002) 27–48; D. Clayton and T. Barnes, Continental European geographers and World War II, *Journal of Historical Geography* 47 (2015) 11–15 and this special issue; T. Barnes and M. Farish, Between regions: science, militarism, and American geography from World War to Cold War, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96 (2006) 807–826. However, see Power and Sidaway, The degeneration of tropical geography; D. Clayton, Militant tropicality: war, revolution and the reconfiguration of 'the tropics' c.1940–c.1975,

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*Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38 (2013) 180–92; D. Clayton and G. Bowd, *Impure and Worldly Geography: Pierre Gourou and Tropicality*, London, forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> See S. Ward, Introduction, in S. Ward (Ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire*, Manchester, 2001, 1–20.

<sup>15</sup> Hodge, British colonial expertise; B.M. Bennett and J.M. Hodge (Eds), *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science Across the British Empire, 1800–1970*, Basingstoke, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> For a rare discussion of the experiences of colonial returnees, see E. Buettner, From somebodies to nobodies: Britons coming home from India, in: M. Daunton and B. Reiger (Eds), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian era to the Second World War*, London, 2001, 221–240; E. Buettner, We don't grow coffee and bananas in Clapham Junction you know! in: R. Bickers, (Ed.), *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Over the Seas*, Oxford, 2010, 302–328.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, R.K. Udo, The past, present and future of geography in Africa: the case of Nigeria (speech given to the Africa Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers, March 10, 2004, Philadelphia, USA), *African Geographical Review* 23 (2010) 85–101; O. Areola and S.I. Okafor, *50 Years of Geography in Nigeria: The Ibadan Story*, Ibadan, 1998. For an attempt to consider the experience of Nigerian geographers in decolonisation see R. Craggs and H. Neate, Decolonisation, post-colonial careering, and the practice of post-war geography, RGS-IBG conference paper, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Driver, *Geography Militant*; G. Kearns, The imperial subject: geography and travel in the work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22 (1997) 450–472; N. Smith and A. Godlewska (Eds), *Geography and Empire*, Oxford, 1994; R. Howitt and S. Jackson, Some things do change: indigenous rights, geographers and geography in Australia, *The Australian Geographer* 29 (1998) 155–173.

<sup>19</sup> L. Jones, Local knowledge and indigenous agency in the history of exploration: studies from the RGS-IBG collections, unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> J. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism*, Athens GA, 2007; J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*, Berkeley, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Hodge, British colonial expertise.

<sup>22</sup> Howett and Jackson, Some things do change; J. Esson, P. Noxolo, R. Baxter, P. Daley and M. Byron, The 2017 RGS-IBG chair's theme: decolonising geographical knowledges, or reproducing coloniality? *Area* 49 (2017) 384–388; S. Radcliffe, Decolonising geographical knowledges, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42 (2017) 329–333.

<sup>23</sup> Hodge, British colonial expertise, 24.

<sup>24</sup> The term was first used by David Lambert and Alan Lester, but is also used explicitly by Hodge, and Craggs and Neate, and implicitly by Pietsch. See D. Lambert and A. Lester, *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2006, 2; Hodge, British colonial expertise; Craggs and Neate, Post-colonial careering and urban policy mobility; Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*.

<sup>25</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of scholars*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Lambert and Lester, *Colonial Lives*; Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*.

<sup>28</sup> Pietsch, Wandering scholars?; Jöns, The University of Cambridge.

<sup>29</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 83.

<sup>30</sup> See, Obituary: Professor Robert Steel 'A lifelong affair with Africa', *The Guardian*, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998, 14; Obituary: Margaret Pugh, *The Year 2013, by Girton College*, 2013, 101–102; Obituary: Andrew Learmonth, *The Guardian*, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

<sup>31</sup> A. Maddrell, *Complex Locations: Women's Geographical Work in the UK 1850–1970*, Chichester, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Craggs and Neate, Post-colonial careering and urban policy mobility.

<sup>33</sup> W. Larner and N. Laurie, Travelling technocrats, embodied knowledges: globalising privatisation

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in telecoms and water, *Geoforum* 41 (2010) 220.

<sup>34</sup> *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, London, 1945, 55.

<sup>35</sup> A. Carr-Saunders, The teaching of geography in colonial colleges: address to the Geographical Association, *Geography* 33 (1948) 1–7.

<sup>36</sup> T. Livsey, Imagining an imperial modernity: universities and the Nigerian roots of colonial development, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44 (2016) 952.

<sup>37</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.

<sup>38</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 61.

<sup>39</sup> RS D91/4/8/17.

<sup>40</sup> M. Prothero, Robert W. Steel CBE, 1915–1997, *African Affairs* 97 (1998) 397–399.

<sup>41</sup> M.J. Wise, Obituary: R. Ogilvie Buchanan 1894–1980, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 8 (1983) 112–114.

<sup>42</sup> David Davies, The University of Zambia, to Robert Steel, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1969, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 4 of 14).

<sup>43</sup> Terry Coppock to Steel, 1963, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 4 of 14); Steel to Michael Barbour, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14); B.W. Hodder memo, Oxford Colonial Records Project, Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter OCRP), MSS Afr. S. 1825 (51), unpaginated.

<sup>44</sup> Steel to Barbour, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1961, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).

<sup>45</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 82

<sup>46</sup> Udo, The past, present and future of geography in Africa; Areola and Okafor, *50 Years of Geography in Nigeria*.

<sup>47</sup> John Pugh memo, OCRP, MSS Afr. S. 1825 92/Box LVII, 4–5; see also Power and Sidaway, The degeneration of tropical geography.

<sup>48</sup> As recalled by Akin Mabogunje, in Power and Sidaway, The degeneration of tropical geography.

<sup>49</sup> John Pugh memo, 32. Power and Sidaway, The degeneration of tropical geography.

<sup>50</sup> John Pugh memo.

<sup>51</sup> Carr-Saunders, The teaching of geography in colonial colleges, 1, 4, 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, 62.

<sup>53</sup> John Pugh to R.O. Buchanan, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1956, Personal Papers of John Pugh, private collection, courtesy of Mike Pugh (hereafter JP papers); Barbour to Steel, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1960, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).

<sup>54</sup> Tony O'Connor, personal communication, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

<sup>55</sup> B.W. Hodder memo.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth (Michael) Barbour memo, OCRP, MSS Afr. S. 1825 Box III (4).

<sup>57</sup> Barbour to Steel, 1963? RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).

<sup>58</sup> Barbour memo; Hodder memo, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Areola and Okafor, *50 Years of Geography in Nigeria*.

<sup>60</sup> Pugh to Sidney Wooldridge, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1955, JP papers.

<sup>61</sup> Hodder memo; Barbour memo. The term 'expatriate' here refers to non-local staff, in practice mainly British but also from the British World of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, and the US and other parts of Europe. As such, expatriate also often meant in practice 'white'. Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.

<sup>62</sup> Pugh memo; T. Livsey, 'Suitable lodgings for students': modern space, colonial development and decolonisation in Nigeria, *Urban History* 41 (2014) 664–685.

<sup>63</sup> Barbour to Steel, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1962, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).

<sup>64</sup> Obituary, Jane Barbour, *The Guardian*, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Acknowledgements, *The Nigerian Geographical Journal* 5 (1962).

<sup>66</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.

<sup>67</sup> Livsey, 'Suitable lodgings for students'.

<sup>68</sup> For more on gender and settler universities, see Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 80–81.

<sup>69</sup> Obituary: Margaret Pugh; Pugh memo, 8.

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- <sup>70</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.
- <sup>71</sup> Pugh memo.
- <sup>72</sup> Interview with Reuban K. Udo, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
- <sup>73</sup> Interview with Michael Chisholm, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- <sup>74</sup> B.H. Farmer, British geographers overseas, 1933–1983, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 8 (1983) 70–79.
- <sup>75</sup> Pugh memo.
- <sup>76</sup> Obituary, R. Mansell Prothero, 1924–2013, *Royal Geographical Society with Institute of British Geographers*, 1 <http://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/653BF1CD-ABE0-4AAC-AFE9-1EC6820848A3/0/ObituaryRMansellProthero.pdf> last accessed 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017. He was still publishing on these issues in the early 1980s. See, for example, R. Mansell Prothero, Medical geography in tropical Africa, in: N.D. McGlashan and J.R. Blunden (Eds), *Geographical Aspects of Health*, London, 1983, 137–153. His pre-Nigeria publications include R. Mansell Prothero, Silting in British reservoirs, *Nature* 168 (1951) 168–170 and R. Mansell Prothero, Factors affecting land use in the Taf Fechan valley, Breconshire, *Journal of the British Grassland Society* 4 (1949) 193–200.
- <sup>77</sup> John Pugh, Curriculum Vitae, JP papers.
- <sup>78</sup> Dick Hodder: Obituary, *The Times*, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006, 79.
- <sup>79</sup> R. Johnston, *Geography and Geographers*, fourth edition, London, 1991, 42–49.
- <sup>80</sup> For example W.B. Morgan, The 'grassland towns' of the eastern region of Nigeria, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23 (1957) 213–224; M. Gleave, The changing frontiers of settlement in the uplands of Northern Nigeria, *Nigerian Geographical Journal* 8 (1965) 127–141; B.W. Hodder, Badagry. I: slave port and mission centre, *Nigerian Geographical Journal* 2 (1962–1963) 75–85; R. Mansell Prothero, Land use at Soba, Zaria Province Northern Nigeria, *Economic Geography* 33 (1957) 72–86.
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- <sup>86</sup> C. Neale, *Writing 'Independent' History: African Historiography, 1960–1980*, Westport, 1985, 9–14.
- <sup>87</sup> Interview with Akin Mabogunje, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016.
- <sup>88</sup> Tony O'Connor, personal communication.
- <sup>89</sup> Barbour memo.
- <sup>90</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.
- <sup>91</sup> *Orbis Geographicus*, Weisbaden, 1966, 64.
- <sup>92</sup> Barbour memo.
- <sup>93</sup> Steel to Barbour, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1960, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).
- <sup>94</sup> Steel to R.O. Buchanan, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1960, RS D91/1/4/2iii (part 2 of 14).
- <sup>95</sup> Tony O'Connor, personal communication.
- <sup>96</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*.
- <sup>97</sup> Interview with Akin Mabogunje.

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- <sup>98</sup> Interview with Akin Mabogunje.
- <sup>99</sup> Barbour memo; Barbour to Steel, 1962, D91/1/4/2iii (part 1 of 14).
- <sup>100</sup> Some Nigerian and British interviewees also describe Barbour as antagonistic to some colleagues at Ibadan, see for example Interview with Hugh Clout, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016; Interview with Reuban K. Udo. Nevertheless, Barbour oversaw important changes in the department that were viewed as crucial for decolonisation.
- <sup>101</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*.
- <sup>102</sup> Pugh to R.O. Buchanan, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1956, JP papers.
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- <sup>104</sup> Buettner, From somebodies to nobodies.
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- <sup>107</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 83.
- <sup>108</sup> Interview with Hugh Clout.
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- <sup>117</sup> M.B. Gleave, another ex-Ibadan staff member, was involved with DARG later, C. Dixon, The Developing Areas Study Group, *Area* 13 (1981) 88; Moss, W.B. Morgan: an appreciation; J.T. Coppock, E. Derbyshire, A. Gilbert, H.S.A. Fox, S.M. Bain, J.C. Dewdney, P.J. Taylor and D.T. Herbert, Study Group Reports, *Area* 5 (1973) 74-78; A. Gilbert, Developing Areas Study Group, *Area* 6 (1974) 74-75.
- <sup>118</sup> See CAS@50 brochure, [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/83022/CAS@50\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/83022/CAS@50_brochure.pdf) last accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Steel and Watson, Geography in the United Kingdom, 142.
- <sup>119</sup> Tony O'Connor, personal communication.
- <sup>120</sup> E. Child and T.J. Barnes, Area studies and American imperial expansion without geography, *Journal of Historical Geography*, in this issue.
- <sup>121</sup> Tony O'Connor, personal correspondence.
- <sup>122</sup> KCL Course outline (1973), University of London Archives, AC/8/24/7/2.
- <sup>123</sup> Interview with DN, graduated from King's College London in 1976, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
- <sup>124</sup> Interview with DN, graduated from King's College London in 1976.
- <sup>125</sup> Interview with Gina Porter, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
- <sup>126</sup> Gina Porter, personal communication, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017.
- <sup>127</sup> Steel and Watson, Geography in the United Kingdom, 150–151.
- <sup>128</sup> Interview with Akin Mabogunje.



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- <sup>129</sup> Interview with Hugh Clout.
- <sup>130</sup> Interview with Gina Porter.
- <sup>131</sup> Carr-Saunders, The teaching of geography, 6.
- <sup>132</sup> R.W. Steel and R. Mansell Prothero (Eds), *Geographers and the Tropics: Liverpool Essays*, London, 1964, 4.
- <sup>133</sup> Udo, The past, present and future, 90.
- <sup>134</sup> G. Myers, Introductory human geography textbook representations of Africa, *Professional Geographer* 53 (2001) 522–532.
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- <sup>136</sup> A. Blunt, *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*, London, 1994; Driver, *Geography Militant*.
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- <sup>142</sup> Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, 79.
- <sup>143</sup> Livsey, *The University Age*.